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RECENT ASCENT OF THE PETER BOTTE MOUNTAIN,

MAURITIUS.

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Crabets.

ASCENT OF THE PETER BOTTE MOUNTAIN.

["Few events at the Mauritius," observes a Correspondent of the *Nautical Magazine*, "have been more talked of lately than that of the ascent of the Peter Botte Mountain." This extraordinary feat was accomplished on the 7th of September last; and its peril and triumph were communicated by Mr. Barrow to the *Royal Geographical Society*, January 28, 1833, in the following extract from a private letter, printed in Part I., vol. iii., of the Society's valuable Journal:]

The Peter Botte has always been considered inaccessible; and although a tradition exists of a man of that name having ascended it, and losing his life in returning, it is seldom believed, no authentic account remaining of the fact. A Frenchman, forty-two years ago, declared that he had got on the top by himself, and made a hole in the rock for a flag-staff; and his countrymen naturally believed him! but the value of this assertion may be also judged of by the present narrative. The ascent has been frequently attempted, and by several people, of late years; once by the officers of his Majesty's ship Samarang, who lost their way and found themselves separated from the Peter Botte itself by a deep cleft in the rock, and in consequence were compelled to return. Captain Lloyd, chief civil engineer, and your old friend Dawkins, made the attempt last year, and succeeded in reaching a point between the shoulder and the neck, where they planted a ladder, which did not however reach halfway up a perpendicular face of rock that arrested their progress. This was the last attempt. Captain Lloyd was then, however, so convinced of the practicability of the undertaking, that he determined to repeat the experiment this year, and accordingly made all his preparations by the beginning of this month. On the 6th, he started from town, accompanied by Lieutenant Phillpotts, of the 29th Reg., Lieutenant Keppel, R.N., and myself. He had previously sent out two of his overseers with about twenty-five negroes and sepoy convicts to make all the necessary preparations. They carried with them a sort of tent, and ropes, crow-bars, a portable ladder, provisions, and everything we could possibly want for three or four days, as we intended to remain on the shoulder of the mountain, close to the base of Peter Botte, until we either succeeded, or were convinced of its impossibility. These men had worked hard; and, on our arriving at the foot of the mountain, we found the tent and all our tools, &c. safely lodged on the shoulder of the Peter Botte. I may as well describe here the appearance of the mountain. From most points of view it seems to rise out of the range

which runs nearly parallel to that part of the sea-coast which forms the bay of Port Louis; but, on arriving at its base, you find that it is actually separated from the rest of the range by a ravine or cleft of a tremendous depth. Seen from the town (as you will perceive by the sketch) it appears a cone with a large overhanging rock at its summit; but so extraordinarily sharp and knife-like is this, in common with all the rocks in the island, that when seen *end on*, as the sailors say, it appears nearly perpendicular. In fact, I have seen it in fifty different points of view, and cannot yet assign to it any one precise form. But to my tale.

We dined that evening and slept at the house of a Frenchman in the plain below, and rose early next morning. All our preparations being made, we started, and a more picturesque line of march I have seldom seen. Our van was composed of about fifteen or twenty sepoys in every variety of costume, together with a few negroes carrying our food, dry clothes, &c. Our path lay up a very steep ravine, formed by the rains in the wet season, which, having loosened all the stones, made it anything but pleasant; those below were obliged to keep a bright look-out for tumbling rocks, and one of these missed Keppel and myself by a miracle.

From the head of this gorge we turned off along the other face of the mountain; and it would have been a fine subject for a picture, to look up from the ravine below and see the long string slowly picking their "kittle" footsteps along a ledge not anywhere a foot broad: yet these monkeys carried their loads full four hundred yards along this face, holding by the shrubs above; while below there was nothing but the tops of the forest for more than nine hundred feet down the slope.

On rising to the shoulder, a view burst upon us which quite defies my descriptive powers. We stood on a little, narrow ledge or neck of land, about twenty yards in length. On the side which we mounted, we looked back into the deep wooded gorge we had passed up; while on the opposite side of the neck, which was between six and seven feet broad, the precipice went sheer down fifteen hundred feet to the plain. One extremity of the neck was equally precipitous, and the other was bounded by what to me was the most magnificent sight I ever saw. A narrow, knife-like edge of rock, broken here and there by precipitous faces, ran up in a conical form to about 300 or 350 feet above us; and on the very pinnacle old "Peter Botte" frowned in all his glory. I have done several sketches of him, one of which, from this point, I send by the same ship as this letter.

After a short rest we proceeded to work. The ladder (see sketch) had been left by Lloyd and Dawkins last year. It was about twelve feet high, and reached, as you may

perceive, about halfway up a face of perpendicular rock. The foot, which was spiked, rested on a ledge, not quite visible in the sketch, with barely three inches on each side. A grapnel-line had been also left last year, but was not used. A negro of Lloyd's clambered from the top of the ladder by the cleft in the face of the rock, not trusting his weight to the old and rotten line. He carried a small cord round his middle; and it was fearful to see the cool, steady way in which he climbed, where a single loose stone or false hold must have sent him down into the abyss; however, he fearlessly scrambled away till at length we heard him halloo from under the neck "all right." These negroes use their feet exactly like monkeys, grasping with them every projection almost as firmly as with their hands. The line carried up he made fast above, and up it we all four "shinned" in succession. It was, joking apart, awful work. In several places the ridge ran to an edge not a foot broad; and I could, as I held on, half-sitting, half-kneeling, across the ridge, have kicked my right shoe down to the plain on one side, and my left into the bottom of the ravine on the other. The only thing which surprised me was my own steadiness and freedom from all giddiness. I had been nervous in mounting the ravine in the morning; but gradually I got so excited and determined to succeed, that I could look down that dizzy height without the smallest sensation of swimming in the head; nevertheless, I held on *uncommonly hard*, and felt very well satisfied when I was safe under the neck. And a more extraordinary situation I never was in. The head, which is an enormous mass of rock, about thirty-five feet in height, overhangs its base many feet on every side. A ledge of tolerably level rock runs round three sides of the base, about six feet in width, bounded everywhere by the abrupt edge of the precipice, except in the spot where it is joined by the ridge up which we climbed. In one spot the head, though overhanging its base several feet, reaches only perpendicularly over the edge of the precipice; and, most fortunately, it was at the very spot where we mounted. Here it was that we reckoned on getting up: a communication being established with the shoulder by a double line of ropes, we proceeded to get up the necessary *matériel*.—Lloyd's portable ladder, additional coils of rope, crowbars, &c. But now the question, and a puzzler too, was how to get the ladder up against the rock. Lloyd had prepared some iron arrows, with thongs, to fire over; and, having got up a gun, he made a line fast round his body, which we all held on, and going over the edge of the precipice on the opposite side, he leaned back against the line, and fired over the least projecting part: had the line broke he would have fallen 1,800 feet. Twice this failed, and then he had re-

course to a large stone with a lead line, which swung diagonally, and seemed to be a feasible plan: several times he made beautiful heaves, but the provoking line would not catch, and away went the stone far down below; till at length Æolus, pleased, I suppose, with his perseverance, gave us a shift of wind for about a minute, and over went the stone, and was eagerly seized on the opposite side.—Hurrah, my lads, "steady's" the word! Three lengths of the ladder were put together on the ledge; a large line was attached to the one which was over the head, and carefully drawn up; and, finally, a two-inch rope, to the extremity of which we lashed the top of our ladder, then lowered it gently over the precipice till it hung perpendicularly, and was steadied by two negroes on the ridge below.—"All right, now hoist away!" and up went the ladder, till the foot came to the edge of our ledge, where it was lashed in firmly to the neck. We then hauled away on the guy to steady it, and made it fast; a line was passed over by the lead-line to hold on, and up went Lloyd, screeching and hallooing, and we all three scrambled after him. The union-jack and a boat-hook were passed up, and Old England's flag waved freely and gallantly on the redoubted Peter Botte. No sooner was it seen flying, than the Undaunted frigate saluted in the harbour, and the guns of our saluting battery replied; for though our expedition had been kept secret till we started, it was made known the morning of our ascent, and all hands were on the look-out, as we afterwards learnt. We then got a bottle of wine to the top of the rock, christened it "King William's Peak," and drank his Majesty's health, hands round the Jack, and then "Hip, hip, hip, hurrah!"

I certainly never felt anything like the excitement of that moment; even the negroes down on the shoulder took up our hurrahs, and we could hear far below the faint shouts of the astonished inhabitants of the plain. We were determined to do nothing by halves, and accordingly made preparations for sleeping under the neck, by hauling up blankets, pea-jackets, brandy, cigars, &c. Meanwhile, our dinner was preparing on the shoulder below; and, about 4 p.m. we descended our ticklish path, to partake of the portable soup, preserved salmon, &c. Our party was now increased by Dawkins and his cousin, a lieutenant of the Talbot, to whom we had written, informing them of our hopes of success; but their heads would not allow them to mount to the head or neck. After dinner, as it was getting dark, I screwed up my nerves, and climbed up to our queer little nest at the top, followed by Tom Keppel, and a negro, who carried some dry wood and made a fire in a cleft under the rock. Lloyd and Phillpotts soon came up, and we began to arrange ourselves for the night, each taking a glass of

brandy to begin with. I had on two pair of trousers, a shooting waistcoat, jacket, and a huge flushing jacket over that, a thick woollen sailor's cap, and two blankets: and each of us lighted a cigar as we seated ourselves to wait for the appointed hour for our signal of success. It was a glorious sight to look down from that giddy pinnacle over the whole island, lying so calm and beautiful in the moonlight, except where the broad, black shadows of the other mountains intercepted the light. Here and there we could see a light twinkling in the plains, or the fire of some sugar manufactory; but not a sound of any sort reached us except an occasional shout from the party down on the shoulder (we four being the only ones above). At length, in the direction of Port Louis, a bright flash was seen, and after a long interval the sullen boom of the evening-gun. We then prepared our pre-arranged signal, and whizz went a rocket from our nest, lighting up for an instant the peaks of the hills below us, and then leaving us in darkness. We next burnt a blue-light, and nothing can be conceived more perfectly beautiful than the broad glare against the overhanging rock. The wild-looking group we made in our uncouth habiliments, and the narrow ledge on which we stood, were all distinctly shown; while many of the tropical birds, frightened at our vagaries, came glancing by in the light and then swooped away, screeching, into the gloom below; for the gorge on our left was dark as Erebus. We burnt another blue-light, and threw up two more rockets, when, our laboratory being exhausted, the patient-looking, insulted moon had it all her own way again. We now rolled ourselves up in our blankets, and, having lashed Phillpotts, who is a determined sleep-walker, to Keppel's leg, we tried to sleep; but it blew strong before the morning—and was very cold! We drank all our brandy, and kept tucking in the blankets the whole night without success. At day-break we rose, stiff, cold, and hungry; and I shall conclude briefly by saying, that after about four or five hours' hard work, we got a hole mined in the rock, and sunk the foot of our twelve-foot ladder deep in this, lashing a water-barrel, as a landmark, at the top; and, above all, a long staff, with the Union Jack flying. We then, in turn, mounted to the top of the ladder to take a last look at a view such as we might never see again; and, bidding adieu to the scene of our toil and triumph, descended the ladder to the neck, and casting off the guys and hauling-lines, cut off all communication with the top.

In order to save time and avoid danger, we now made fast a line from the neck to the shoulder, as taut as possible; and hanging on our traps by means of rings, launched them one by one from the top, and down they flew, making the line smoke again. All were

thus conveyed safely to the shoulder, except one unlucky bag, containing a lot of blankets, my spy-glass, and sundry other articles, which, not being firmly fixed, broke the preventive-line, and took its departure down to Pamplemousses. We at length descended, and reached the shoulder all safe and without any accident, except that of the blankets—not a rope-yarn being left to show where we got up. We then breakfasted, and after a long and somewhat troublesome descent, got to the low country, and drove in Lloyd's carriage to town, where we were most cordially welcomed by all our countrymen; though, I believe, we were not quite so warmly greeted by the French inhabitants, who are now constrained to believe that their countryman *alone* did not achieve the feat, and that the British ensign has been the first to wave over the redoubtable Peter Botte.

[The annexed Engraving has been also transferred from a well-executed lithograph, which accompanies the narrative in the *Journal of the Geographical Society*.

By the way, what abundant promise of valuable information, and that too, of the most entertaining character, have we in the present Number of the *Geographical Journal*. Here are seven sheets of letter-press, eight charts, and two views, for half-a-crown! Verily, this eclipses the cheapest of the continental journals. It should certainly be purchased by every club, book-society, and librarian, in the kingdom; and the account of the ascent of Peter Botte will assure the public that the *Journal* to which we would direct their attention is not the mere dry abstract of the proceedings of the Society, but a truly valuable and amusing collection of discoveries in geographical science. To conclude, this *Journal* has only to be seen to advance the important objects for which the Geographical Society has been formed.]

TOURS IN UPPER INDIA, THE HIMALAYA MOUNTAINS, &c.

[THESE are two volumes of lively, graphic sketches, by Major Archer, late Aid-de-Camp to Lord Combermere. They relate the customs, and describe the natural splendour, of the country with great vigour, and they contain not a few interesting particulars of the Courts of the native rulers. The first of our extracts narrates the career of one of the most extraordinary of these petty sovereigns.]

The Begum Somroo.

Sirdanah is the city and head-quarters of the Begum Somroo, who possesses the country around as a life-fief, or jagheer; which, originally estimated at six, is by her extremely good management made eight lacs annually: this was confirmed to her by Lord Lake; but it reverts to the government at her death.

The history of this remarkable woman is such, that a slight, and perhaps imperfect account, or rather glance at it, may prove of interest. In Asiatic countries, the rise of an obscure individual to the possession of imperial power was by no means of singular, or even infrequent occurrence. What would appear impracticable in Europe, was in Asia scarcely extraordinary. The instance of the Begum attaining princely power over the population of a flourishing country deserves to be recorded, if only for the able and just manner in which she exercises her control; though so rapid an accession to dominion, it is to the natives, or strangers familiar with the history of the country, scarcely dwelt on, among so many instances of a similar description. In early life she was a nautch girl; but who her parents were, or from what part of the country she came, is now lost to information;—it is, however, conjectured, from her exceeding fairness of complexion and peculiar features, that her family were of northern extraction. Her attractions and accomplishments secured the attentions of a Geoman adventurer, by name Somroo, which it appears was an appellative given him for his constant sombre and melancholy appearance.

It was this miscreant who superintended the murder of the English gentlemen of the factory at Patna, in 1763. Flying from the resentment of the British, who shortly afterwards re-captured Patna, Somroo bent his course to Upper India, and entered the service of the Rajah of Bhurtpore, and subsequently of other native chiefs, until, from favourable circumstances, which were taken advantage of by his abilities, he became possessed of a large space of country to the north-east of Delhi. He died in full possession of his power. The Begum subsequently married a Frenchman; but by neither of these unions had she any children—at least, none are now alive. It appears that the Frenchman meditated a return to Europe, and communicated his wishes to the Begum, who at first made no hesitation to the project. All the valuables, in the shape of jewels and money, were to be collected, and then, in secrecy and the dead of the night, they were to mount their elephants, and make the best of their way to the Company's territories. The Begum had also her own project, and a daring and subtle one it was. She had the wit to know, that in any other country she would soon cease to be in her husband's eye an object of regard, rather perhaps one of forgetfulness, if not of active violence: she naturally supposed that the Frenchman cared for her money alone, and would appropriate it to his own peculiar use. With a refinement in hypocrisy, she assented to all his plans, but privately laid her own in a manner that could not fail, in some way, to fulfil her expectations. She

gave orders to her own immediate attendants to communicate in privacy with the soldiery the part which her husband intended to pursue, and to express to them how much that purpose was at variance with her own inclinations, which were wholly inseparable from the presence and the happiness of her people. Upon this, a scheme of ambush was so prepared, that the Frenchman had no chance of escape, even admitting he had seen through the artifice by which his life fell a sacrifice. The Begum communicated to him her false fears of detection, and pointed out the dishonour that must attach itself to their act of desertion, and for her own part vehemently protested that she would die by her own hand rather than be compelled to return by force: she never would consent to be removed from her husband. He, silly man, entered into a compact with her to destroy himself, in the event of being overtaken and interrupted in their design. For this desperate purpose they provided themselves with pistols, and at the dead of night he mounted his elephant, and she got into her palankeen. At the appointed spot the ambush was ready, and all things answered the Begum's intentions—the opposing party soon made the escort of the Begum and her husband fly. The attendants ran to inform him that the Begum had shot herself. In the noise and confusion many matchlocks had been let off, so that he could not tell if her having been molested was probable or not. On rushing to her palankeen to ascertain the truth, he was alarmed by the clamour and apparent affliction of those who surrounded it; and, upon a towel saturated with blood being shown him, as confirmation of the Begum's having destroyed herself, he placed a pistol to his head, and shot himself.

The Begum, who had till then never appeared in male society, threw open the blinds of her palankeen, and mounted an elephant: she harangued the troops upon her attachment to them, and her opposition to the commands of her husband; she professed no other desire than to be at their head, and to share her wealth with them. The novelty of the situation lent energy to her action, and eloquence to her language; and amid the acclamations of the soldiers she was led back in triumph to the camp. It is said she scrupled not to spurn her husband's lifeless corpse, and vituperated his ineffectual endeavours to alienate her from the affections of her people. Having been their former chief's wife, she identified herself as belonging exclusively to them.

Lord Lake found her, in the wars of 1803, 4, and 5, friendly to the English interests, and got the Government to confirm her in the jagheer. She has, through a long life, maintained her station and security among a host of contending powers, and may bear the

honour of a similarity of character with our Elizabeth. True it is, that her government was politic and respected when her power was thought of consequence; now, when age has chilled her blood, and the march of events has left her no exercise for those talents which would have shone with splendour on a more extended theatre, she has turned her attention to the agricultural improvement of her country, though she knows she is planting that which others will reap. Her fields look greener and more flourishing, and the population of her villages appear happier and more prosperous than those of the Company's provinces. Her care is unremitting, and her protection sure. Formerly a Mahometan, she is now a Roman Catholic, and has in her service many priests and officers of that persuasion. At her metropolis she has erected a very beautiful church, on the model of St. Peter's: it is almost finished; little remains to be done, and that is on the outside. The altar is remarkably handsome: it is of white marble, from Jypoor, and inlaid with various coloured stones.

The Begum has a body of troops for the protection of her person and the collection of her revenues: besides which, she furnishes her contingent quota to the British. These troops are liberally paid and clothed, and in appearance are far better looking than any troops in the pay of native princes. She is liberal, and many share her bounty. Her character for humanity does not stand so high; and there are numerous stories of murders having been done by her orders, and in her presence. Even those about her say she is a severe mistress. A story is current of her having detected one of her household damsels in an intrigue with her lover. The unfortunate girl's punishment was inhumanity alive; and over the grave the remorseless and relentless mistress ordered her own bed to be placed, where she slept the whole night. She is a most remarkable woman; her talents have raised and now maintain her, in her present situation, the duties of which she performs punctually and systematically.

The Begum is building a fine house at Kirwah, as it has been prognosticated by the astrologers, that if she returns to Sirdanah, she will cease to live: thus affording another instance of the very close alliance which subsists between the power and comprehensiveness of the human mind and its weakness. Though now seventy-five years of age, she feels disposed to bamboozle the fates, for back to her capital she does not intend to go. She has fine houses at Meerut and Delhi, and also possesses a garden near Bhurtpore, and a good house within that fort.* She received

his Excellency with salutes of cannon and turn-out of troops, and entertained the whole party to breakfast and dinner, which was laid out in tents for the occasion.

The above sketch is from one who has known her all his life, and who is dignified by the name of her "son." "Hon. John" being the elder, will succeed to the inheritance—a barren sceptre being that within her grasp.

[Here follows a scene of as gross idolatry as ever figured in the mythological annals of ages long past:—]

Dance and Sacrifice to the Gods.

In the afternoon we went down to the temple, (at Pecca,) the priests, at our solicitation, having agreed, (odd and irreverend as it may be deemed,) to give the gods a dance. After the prefatory drumming and sounding of horns, two divinities were brought forth, and "strange gods" they were. These were fashioned as nearly as follows:—A circular piece of brass, about ten inches deep, and a foot and a quarter in diameter, like a broad hoop, had round it several faces of divinities *in alto relievo*, about six inches long; a large quantity of black hair, from the tail of the Thibet cow, was fastened to the top, and fell down like the fashion called mop-curls of a lady; below this hoop, and fastened to it, depended clothes in the shape of petticoats, of ample dimensions, made of silk and cotton cloths. On a frame, consisting of two poles, with a cross piece, having in the centre a spindle fixed to it, the figure was stuck, the petticoats coming low down; the poles were, perhaps, ten or twelve feet long, and the ends brought so close to each other as to allow their fitting upon the shoulders of two men. The poles of a sedan-chair, with a platform in the middle instead of the chair, having a peg projecting on which to stick the god, is the nearest resemblance I can find for the machinery. All being ready, a band of instruments struck up such sounds as one might imagine would serve as revelry for the powers of darkness; and if superstition and gross idolatry are two, that which is now recorded was fit music for them. Two men took each of the frames, and resting them on their shoulders, moved to the music in measured steps; the mop of hair and petticoats danced too; the gods jumped about, and now and then most lovingly knocked their heads together. As the men became tired, others took their places, for it was fatiguing work.

An unfortunate goat, lean and emaciated, pride of the Begum, who remonstrated. She was told that the large and holy place of Nutra was to be confided to her care. "Nonsense," said she, "if I don't go to Bhurtpore, all Hindoostan will say I am grown a coward in my old age." Circumstances quickly permitted the old lady "to attend the ceremony."

* When the army was before Bhurtpore, in 1836, the commander-in-chief was desirous that no native chief of our allies should accompany the besieging force with any of his troops. This order hurt the

was brought as an offering to the deities; but so poor in flesh was he, that no crow would have waited his death in hopes of a meal from his carcass. I never saw so miserable a beast; and it struck me that the veneration of the natives for their divinities stopped short of pampering their appetites. The tragic part of the ceremony was now to begin. Some water was thrown upon the back of the animal, and the assembly awaited his shaking his head in a particular way, which is construed to mean, "the god speaks within him," and denotes by such sign his acceptance of the victim. On this occasion, having ample cause to be incensed at the attenuated appearance of the offering, he flatly refused, and *par conséquence*, the goat was immovable. A supposed never-failing resource was then tried. Some water was spilled into the goat's ear; still he was inflexible, and no confirmatory symptom appeared. All this looked badly. The goat walked about, and much whispering took place as to the probable cause to be assigned for the non-acquiescence of the gods for fair weather to our party to the pass, which indeed was the object and purport of the ceremony. The Fates were against the poor animal, as they have been against all goats placed in similar situations; and though he determinedly refused to nod, yet it was unanimously voted that he had done so, upon the sole testimony of the owner, who wished to realize a sum for his carcass. I must here testify against the truth of this evidence, which never could have been admitted in any court of law, and which must have been detected, had not the whole party, more or less, been implicated in his destruction. But I was interested in the animal's rescue, and took great care to observe if, by sound or look, he gave countenance to the supposition of his assent; and can seriously and truly aver, that he was not in the most remote degree accessory to his own death. Forthwith outstepped a man with a Goorcha knife, and with one blow the head was separated from the body. The warm tide of life escaped, and deluged the stones; the instruments brayed their dissonance; the crowd shouted, and each made his vow, and petitioned the deity for what he wanted. The head was set apart for the gods, the blood flowing from it having been sprinkled over them, as it was over the musical instruments. The carcass became the perquisite of the priests, who must not have had either weakness of tooth, or queasiness of stomach, to make a meal of it.

It was altogether a revolting scene, and once is sufficient to witness the disgusting performance, which, though ridiculous enough in bringing the deities on a level with themselves, was still that of sensual and gross idolatry in the mountaineers.

[The other extracts are of a more miscel-

laneous character. Major Archer witnessed the following instances of the]

Ferocity of an Elephant.

A man, whose duty it is to clean the animal, and when at work to urge him forward with the application of a large stick, was acting in his vocation, when suddenly the elephant put out one of his hind feet, pulled the unfortunate fellow in under him, and commenced kicking him from his fore to his hind legs; an operation these animals perform with so much accuracy and celerity, as to jumble the carcass of a tiger or wild boar to a mummy in a few seconds. The violence was instantly perceived; and the driver digging the iron spike into the head of the elephant, made him yield up the lad, who was quite insensible, having had one of his thighs broken, and other hurts, but none of them so serious. He was put on a bed, formed by a ladder and a howdah cover, and sent to camp. The quickness with which an elephant can hook in any thing with his hind legs, and the unerring certainty with which he can kick it like a ball between all four legs, is so great and extraordinary, that this poor lad's rescue with life was quite miraculous.

House for Women.

At Dutteah we had an opportunity of seeing the inside of a house built especially for the convenience of the fair sex. All the guards that suspicious jealousy could devise to prevent the angel-faced creatures from being seen by other eyes than those of their lord and master, were in progress. The tracery and net-work was so contrived as to allow the inmates to look beyond their prison, but out of it alive they have no chance of going; their repinings can only be surmised by strangers, for they have no possibility of seeing any one but their owner, who looks upon them as formed to minister to his pleasures, and to have no other aim but that which points to so *worthy* a purpose. They are all confined to one story; there is only one entrance to the whole mansion, and that is strictly guarded.

Enormous Bustard.

A bustard was seen to-day by some of our hawking party; the hawks were flown, but would not attack it; it was shot by a native, and brought to camp. The bird was an old one, weighed twenty-seven pounds and a half, and measured across the wings seven feet and a half. His ruff and beard were enormous, and looked most venerable.

The Ganges and Jumna.

I asked a Sepoy which was the favourite river, well knowing he would say the Ganges: he did so. When it was replied to him that the Ganges was a dirty, muddy river, and

the Jumna was beautifully clear, "Yes," he said, "it was true; but Gungah Jee* was the favourite, although the Jumna was her sister. But Gungah was married, and the spouse of Mahadeo: Himmalaya is her parent;—the Yamunah† was still running her career of single blessedness." What a triumph for wedded life! it left bachelorship at a discount. All natives consider the waters of the Ganges to be sweeter and more hallowed than those of any other river. The votary of Brahma, in his extremity, is desirous to be brought to the edge of its sacred stream, there to breathe his last sigh, and to look his last look upon its waves: they are to him either the waters of Immortality in Hope, or the Lethean stream which is to steep the past in forgetfulness.

Boiling Spring.

In the vicinity of Monghyr is a hot spring, called by the natives Seeta Khoond, which indeed is the general designation of all hot springs. The mythological tradition attached to it is Hindoo; it may, however, be as correctly declared to be Grecian. The goddess Seeta was pursued by a giant; dreading his violence, and seeing no other way of escape, she took refuge underground, and from her body the hot spring proceeds. Behind Monghyr are ranges of hills, which give a pretty effect to the scenery; much jungle between them and the fort. Some dangerous rocks are in the middle of the stream above the fort; upon them are white pillars, to warn approaching boats: these rocks are nearly covered in the rains. Parts of the works in the fort are on rocks. The scenery to the hot spring and the meadow into which it runs is very pretty. What adds to the curiosity is the immediate proximity of a cold spring to the hot one, and both take their course into the meadow. The hot spring runs far before its waters lose their heat; they are clear, and, when cool, delicious for drinking.

The hot spring is enclosed in a brick building about sixteen feet square: the temperature is usually 138°; in the cold weather it is something less. The body of the water is four feet deep, and the spring copious enough to form a fast-running stream. Troops of washer-men have established themselves on its margin, to save firewood. The water has no salt or lime, and only carbonic gas. The place is one of pilgrimage, and many accidents have happened to the foremost, who have been pushed in by those behind: they were invariably killed. A short time ago an unlucky pony fell into the reservoir, and was scalded to death.

* The usual adjunct.

† The proper pronunciation of the river.

Natural History.

HABITS OF BIRDS.

[This is another portion of the Zoological Series of the *Library of Entertaining Knowledge*; and illustrates by well digested facts and amusing anecdotes, the cleanliness, the solitary and gregarious habits of birds, the pairing, the structure and hatching of their eggs, and the sheltering of the young; enriched with the valuable observant notes of J. R. (James Rennie): *ea. gr.*]

Sparrows.

Certain gregarious birds may be observed always to have a sentinel stationed near them while feeding, whose office it is to give timely alarm of threatening danger or indications of its approach. When a flock of sparrows, accordingly, alight in the corner of a wheat-field, and, as Bloomfield says,—

"Drop one by one upon the bending corn,"*

we may always be certain of discovering one, or perhaps several, perched on some commanding station in the adjacent hedge-row, prying into the probable design of every movement among men or animals which lies within ken of the watch-tower. The instant the sentinel perceives anything which he deems worthy of notice, he gives his well-known signal, at which the whole flock hurry off from their banquet with the utmost celerity and trepidation. Their fears are for the most part, only momentary, for as soon as they ascertain that there is no immediate danger, they hasten back to finish their meal.

Sparrows which are denizens of towns and cities act much in the same manner, though they are forced to learn to be, if possible, more quick and cautious than their rural kindred of the farm-yards. The city sparrows, abundant in the very centre of the metropolis, seldom congregate in very numerous flocks, and are more commonly observed in foraging parties of from two to half-a-dozen, subsisting in the more open streets on what they can find on the pavements, and particularly haunting stables, to pick up oats and grass-seeds shaken from hay. We have watched by the hour the devices of these sparrows to avoid being surprised by boys or by cats. When they discover a scattering of oats, they seldom fly directly to the spot, but take several turns around it as if to ascertain the safest point of approach. If it is near the wall they will cling, with their backs downwards, to rough projections of the mortar, or to an accidental crevice between the bricks, looking round the while with the utmost caution; and thus will they descend the wall, by little and little, till within a few feet of their wished-for prize, upon which

* Farmer's Boy.

they will pounce down, one or more at a time, and carry off a mouthful to the nearest roof where they can eat it in leisure and safety. But what we particularly wish to call attention to is, that though each individual of a party manifests such extraordinary caution, they have usually the farther safeguard of a sentinel stationed on some adjacent projection of a roof-lead or a window, who fails not to announce to his companions below the approach of every passenger, and particularly of every cat that endeavours to steal upon them unawares.

From all we have been able to observe, there does not seem to be anything like an election or appointment of such sentinels. The fact appears rather to be, that, probably from being less impelled by the calls of hunger, the bird of the flock who chances to be the last in venturing to alight, feels then reluctant to join his companions in consequence of an instinctive foresight that they might all be thence exposed to danger. We only offer this, however, as a plausible conjecture, which appears more applicable to the case of sparrows than to that of some other gregarious birds. Were we disposed, indeed, to indulge in the fancies sometimes found in books of natural history, we might give the sparrows credit not only for appointing sentinels, but for trying them for neglect of duty by a regular court-martial.

Sparrow-courts, or assemblies of sparrows for some common object regarding one of their community, are of frequent occurrence; and in truth they can scarcely escape the observation of any one who attends to the habits of animals. The birds usually select a spot somewhat remote from their usual haunts, such as the centre of a copse or the edge of a wood, where they may be seen crowding closely around one of this number, and scolding him in all the terms of their vocabulary. Whether they proceed from verbal reproof, however, to corporal chastisement, we have never ascertained, for they are so jealous, on such occasions, of intruders, that they immediately stay process and break up their court, should a prying naturalist venture within the precincts. Descriptions precisely analogous have been given by different authors of assemblies of rooks, or *crow-courts*, as they are called. In the latter, however, if we may believe what is reported, there is a regular trial of a delinquent, who, upon being found guilty, receives a severe drubbing from the whole court, and is even sometimes killed outright.*

HUMBOLDT.

[The editors of the *Edinburgh Cabinet Library* have judiciously condensed into one

of its volumes, "the *Travels and Researches of Alexander von Humboldt*." In the Preface they observe "that some notices respecting his early life introduce the reader to an acquaintance with his character and motives, as the adventurous traveller, who, crossing the Atlantic, traversed the ridges and plains of Venezuela, ascended the Orinoco to its junction with the Amazon, sailed down the former river to the capital of Guiana, and after examining the Island of Cuba mounted by the valley of the Magdalena to the elevated platforms of the Andes, explored the majestic solitudes of the great cordilleras of Quito, navigated the margin of the Pacific Ocean, and wandered over the extensive and interesting provinces of New Spain, whence he made his way back by the United States to Europe. The publication of the important results of this journey was not completed when he undertook another to Asiatic Russia and the confines of China, from which he has but lately returned."

We quote a few extracts describing

Curious Trees.

Orotava, the Taoro of the Guanches, (in the island of Teneriffe,) is situated on a very steep declivity, and has a pleasant aspect when viewed from a distance, although the houses, when seen at hand, have a gloomy appearance. One of the most remarkable objects in this place is the dragon-tree in the garden of M. Franqui, of which an engraving is here presented, and which our travellers found to be about 60 feet high, with a circumference of 48 feet near the roots. The trunk divides into a great number of branches



(Dragon Tree of Orotava, from Humboldt.)

* Landt. Description of the Feroe Isles.

which rise in the form of a candelabrum, and are terminated by tufts of leaves. This tree is said to have been revered by the Guanches as the ash of Ephesus was by the Greeks; and in 1402, at the time of the first expedition of Bethencour, was as large and as hollow as our travellers found it. As the species is of very slow growth, the age of this individual must be great. It is singular, that the dragon-tree should have been cultivated in these islands at so early a period, it being a native of India, and no where occurring on the African continent.

[The previous Cut is from the Atlas to Humboldt's Travels, the drawings for which were taken in 1776. Half the crown of the tree has since fallen. Humboldt considers this to be one of the oldest trees of the globe, and computes its age at 1000 years.]

Zamang Tree.

"On leaving the village of Turnero," says Humboldt, "we discover, at the distance of a league, an object which appears on the horizon like a round hillock, or a tumulus covered with vegetation. It is not a hill, however, nor a group of very close trees, but a single tree, the celebrated *Zamang* of *Guayra*, known over the whole province for the enormous extent of its branches, which form a hemispherical top 614 feet in circumference. The *zamang* is a beautiful species of mimosa, whose tortuous branches divide by forking. Its slim and delicate foliage is agreeably detached on the blue of the sky. We rested a long while beneath this vegetable arch. The trunk of the *Guayra zamang* which grows on the road from Turnero to Maracay, is not more than 64 feet high and 9½ feet in diameter; but its real beauty consists in the general form of its top. The branches stretch out like the spokes of a great umbrella, and all incline towards the ground, from which they uniformly remain twelve or fifteen feet distant. The circumference of the branches or foliage is so regular, that I found the different diameters 205 and 198 feet. One side of the tree was entirely stripped of leaves from the effect of drought, while on the other both foliage and flowers remained. The branches were covered with creeping plants. The inhabitants of these valleys, and especially the Indians, have a great veneration for the *Guayra zamang*, which the first conquerors seem to have found nearly in the same state as that in which we now see it. Since it has been attentively observed, no change has been noticed in its size or form. It must be at least as old as the dragon-tree of Orotava.

Cow Tree.

"Among the many curious phenomena," says Humboldt, "which presented themselves to me in the course of my travels, I confess

there were few by which my imagination was so powerfully affected as the cow-tree. All that relates to milk and to the cereal plants inspires us with an interest, which is not merely that of the physical knowledge of things, but which connects itself with another order of ideas and feelings. We can hardly imagine how the human species could exist without farinaceous substances, and without the nutritious fluid which the breast of the mother contains, and which is appropriated to the condition of the feeble infant. The amylaceous matter of the cereal plants,—the object of religious veneration among so many ancient and modern nations,—is distributed in the seeds, and deposited in the roots of vegetables; while the milk which we use as food appears exclusively the product of animal organization. Such are the impressions which we receive in early childhood, and such is the source of the astonishment with which we are seized on first seeing the cow-tree. Magnificent forests, majestic rivers, and lofty mountains clad in perennial snows, are not the objects which we here admire. A few drops of a vegetable fluid impress us with an idea of the power and fecundity of nature. On the parched side of a rock grows a tree with dry and leathery foliage, its large woody roots scarcely penetrating into the ground. For several months in the year its leaves are not moistened by a shower; its branches look as if they were dead and withered; but when the trunk is bored, a bland and nourishing milk flows from it. It is at sunrise that the vegetable fountain flows most freely. At that time the blacks and natives are seen coming from all parts, provided with large bowls to receive the milk, which grows yellow and thickens at its surface. Some empty their vessels on the spot, while others carry them to their children. One imagines he sees the family of a shepherd who is distributing the milk of his flock."

The Robellist.

THE PURITAN'S GRAVE.

(Continued from page 358.)

"I LEFT them together purposely," replied Adelaide, "I can see that though you may call one a Puritan, and the other a cavalier, they are well adapted to each other, they have many sentiments in common. I, therefore, think that I am doing them a service, by thus facilitating their acquaintance."

Lost in astonishment, the knight began to reprove her, and especially for burying herself among dull books. "But let that pass," he continued, "I will now only speak of you folly in throwing away your lover."

Mildly and calmly interrupting her father's

speech; Adelaide replied, "Henry St. John is no lover of mine!"

The passionate indignation of Sir Thomas, nothing could repress; he sought out St. John and bade him be away, and never to enter the house whose roof he had dishonoured, or the towers of Emmerton to disgrace them by his presence again.

Henry St. John called at the vicarage to bid farewell, and stammered out the fact of his departure from Emmerton Hall; Ferdinand Faithful saw in his statement a corroboration of the opinion which he had formed of the young cavalier, that he was a youth of impetuous and hasty spirit; and he was deeply grieved that his daughter Anne should have given her affections to such a one. He spoke to St. John, not discourteously indeed, but with a cold, constrained civility, as though he desired the visit to be as short as possible. The visit was speedily finished.

Sad was the situation of St. John; banished from the Hall, looked coldly upon at the vicarage, he took his melancholy way to Derby, intending to make his journey to London, where he might find the means of diverting his mind.

It was evening when he departed, but the moon was up and shining gloriously upon a landscape which displayed well the beauties of a fine night. The pretty village of Emmerton lay at the foot of an ascending ridge of hills; he drew the bridle so that the horse on which he was riding turned round also, and, as if attached to the spot which his master had left with reluctance, or recollecting the unmeasured hospitality of the stable at Emmerton Hall, moved towards the village again; nor did Henry St. John oppose the movement.

The village clock was striking ten as Henry St. John was crossing the bridge on his return. As he was looking towards the church, which might be distinctly seen from the bridge, he saw a female form passing through the churchyard to the vicar's house. In a moment he knew it to be the form of Anne Faithful, and in another moment he was by her side. By six or seven imperfectly uttered words on either side, they understood and knew themselves to be lovers. * * * *

They parted. Henry St. John, though of good family, and not without some patrimonial estate, was nevertheless in the condition of many other young cavaliers, having a spirit and pride beyond his possessions, and seeking to add to his inheritance by promotion in the army or at court, London was the place to which he must direct his steps. With all their talk, the question when they should meet again remained undecided. They parted:—the one renewed his journey, and with a lighter though not unanxious heart, rode towards the town of Derby, while the other sought her hitherto happy home.

Now commenced the troubles of Ferdinand Faithful. Not many months passed away in a state of trembling anxiety, before it was settled that those ministers of religion who would not conform to the will of the court, must relinquish their posts, and refrain their lips from instruction and exhortation. The day of St. Bartholomew will be long recollected by the people of England. The Sunday preceding the feast of St. Bartholomew, did Ferdinand fix, in common with many others of the Puritan persuasion, to take his farewell of his flock.

It was a melting sight at Emmerton. As soon as the singers and congregation had finished singing the morning hymn, Ferdinand Faithful rose. There was a silence so profound that scarcely a breath was heard. In this painful interval, some slight sobbings were heard, for hearts were touched and tears were flowing unseen; these sobbings at length called the good man to his recollection, and by means of a great effort, bracing himself up as it were to a moral conflict, he subdued the swelling of his heart and was enabled to speak. At the close of the sermon, Ferdinand Faithful found himself so far overcome by the efforts which he had made to suppress his feelings, that he sank down in his pulpit quite exhausted. When he came out of church—"God's blessing go with you, sir, wherever you go," was the greeting of every lip. And taking his station on the seat, which he had erected for the comfort of his aged parishioners, they all passed him with the farewell upon their lips. "Farewell," he said, "I must leave you and live away from you; how I must live I know not, but I do not despair; these" pointing to his wife and daughters, "are an encouragement to my diligence and a ground of my hope. But though I must live away from you, yet I could wish that I may not die away from you. Yet if even the privilege of closing my eyes in my beloved village of Emmerton be forbidden me, I would make it a request that I may have a resting place for my bones in this churchyard. I am banished from the church in my life, let me not be excluded from the churchyard in my death. Here, on this spot, let me be buried, and let there be no other inscription placed on my monument than this—THE PURITAN'S GRAVE."

To London did Ferdinand Faithful journey with his little household, for there he thought he might turn to best account the talents wherewith his Maker had blessed him; and here, if compelled to live in poverty and a low estate, he might pass unnoticed in the crowd, and not draw upon himself the observation of rude neighbours, or the finger of scorn. He was qualified by school learning, and by general ability for any profession, but it was somewhat late to begin to learn, and the instruction of youth for which he was

well qualified, was an occupation from which he was prohibited by the rigour of the late act. Whilst in this state of uncertainty and suspense, there came certain individuals of the mercantile profession who having heard of his arrival in London, and hearing of his pious character at Emmerton, besought him to assist them with his services in forming a church independent of the establishment. It was necessary that everything should be conducted with the strictest secrecy. A room was fitted up as a chapel, and a meeting was held in it. At last it was publicly found out, and the hand of persecution was raised against Ferdinand Faithful and his little flock. The circumstances that led to the detection were very singular. The warehouse or room in which Ferdinand officiated, was in a narrow street leading out of Cheapside towards the river; and the place where he and his family lodged, was in the neighbourhood of Fleet-street, so that in going from one to the other, he had occasion to go through St. Paul's Churchyard. One day Henry St. John encountered Anne Faithful in that thoroughfare, who with her sister, Mary, were proceeding towards the place at which their father officiated. Great was the surprise of Ferdinand Faithful at this meeting, for Henry St. John insisted upon accompanying them. Having ascertained their residence, Henry became a constant visitor at the lodgings of Ferdinand Faithful, and it could not of course be possible to conceal from him the fact, that the non-conforming minister was in the habit of privately officiating to a society of non-conformists: and notwithstanding all they could say to the contrary, he would insist on occasionally accompanying them; yet it must be said, that he never affected or pretended to be converted to their way of thinking, only that he received much moral pleasure and some improvement from listening to the discourse and devotion of a truly pious man, whatever might be his peculiar opinions. There is an ancient proverb "A pitcher that goes oft to the well, may come home broke at last," and so did it happen to Ferdinand Faithful.

In the same street in which the meeting was held, there dwelt a Jew money-lender, named Samuel Mendoza, who had been of great service to Sir Thomas Merrivale in the matter of accommodation. Going late on a Saturday night to this man's house in order to ask money, he was astonished to meet a refusal from the Jew. Emmerton was already burdened as much as it would bear, at the hearing of which Sir Thomas flew into an ungovernable fury. The Jew would not suffer him to depart in this mood, for an instance had occurred some two years before, of a gentleman sallying from the house of Samuel Mendoza under similar circumstances, and proceeding forthwith to the river, where,

in despair, he plunged in and perished, by which the Jew's character had suffered. So instead of money, he put wine before the knight, who drank till morning, talking braggadocio; and, as he staggered from the street on the Sabbath dawn he espied Henry St. John at a little distance making for the place where Ferdinand Faithful was used to officiate. Marvelling what he was about, for this was the first time he had encountered St. John since his dismissal from Emmerton, the knight determined on watching him, and following him quickly, overtook him just as Henry was entering the place of meeting, and the keeper of the door seeing the two together supposed that they were of one party, and so admitted them. The intoxicated cavalier then found himself in, what he was pleased to call, an illegal conventicle.

The result of this was that Ferdinand Faithful and his hearers were taken before a magistrate; heavy fines were imposed, which were paid by Henry St. John and others. But the worst of it was, that having been once before the magistrate, the Puritan became a mark for spies and informers, by whom he was accused again and again, till at length, for what they were pleased to call his contumacy, he was sent a prisoner to Newgate.

Bitterly did Henry St. John repent that he had been the unconscious and accidental means of leading Sir Thomas Merrivale to the meeting, by which he had been the cause of sending Ferdinand Faithful to prison. Sensible and painful was the change in the condition of the pious man. He could meet and encounter a sharp persecution, and resist an unholy domination over conscience; but though much can be endured in the activity of a conflict, where no conflict is to inspire and encourage, and the iron enters the soul, it is sad indeed. Very soon did havoc make a change in his appearance. But a trouble was coming over him, far deeper than all which had hitherto visited him, and that was the illness of his daughter Mary. A more affectionate and gentle being than Mary Faithful did not exist. Her constitution was not strong or robust, and her spirit bent to every breeze. This gentle being had spent her whole life in a retired village, and she was now brought into collision with the rude rabble of a great and dirty city. In seeking occasionally, as was necessary, her solitary way to the place of her father's confinement, she was frequently assailed by the rude jibes and jeers of the insolent vulgar. Her soul was filled with emotions of terror and disgust.

At length the prelates of the church began to consider seriously what was best to be done, for they saw that the spirit of Ferdinand Faithful was not to be broken by persecution, and they thought he might (with many

others,) be brought over, or at least softened by kindness. An order came for his liberation, and he was suffered to go home.

Great was the joy of the family of the Faithfuls on the return of Ferdinand to their bosom; but great was the shock the alteration in her father's appearance gave to the sinking spirits of Mary. Ferdinand and his family set themselves diligently to procure the means of subsistence by their own industry. For though nothing could surpass the ingenious delicacy with which Henry St. John assisted the family, yet they one and all possessed minds of too great susceptibility not to be distressed at receiving so much from him who owed them nothing. Anne Faithful wrought most beautifully with her needle, and Henry St. John bore away her productions to dispose of them, as he said, among his friends; and ample payment he brought back, with many flattering speeches from persons of quality who had seen and admired the work.

For many days did Anne pursue her labour, and at last when a piece of work was done, on which much hope was set, she consigned it to the hands of Henry St. John, saying, "Come, you must be my factor once more, and obtain me a good price for this my handiwork." And he looked on the embroidery with much admiration, and on Anne Faithful with much tenderness of affection; and he said, "Trust me, fair friend, I will do my best; but as this is a costly piece of work, it may meet with many admirers before it finds a purchaser. So, I pray you, be not impatient should a little longer time elapse than has heretofore been the case, between my receiving and my executing the commission."

Anne Faithful thought she saw in the face of Henry St. John a look of more than usual thoughtfulness. She gently reproached him that he should conceal affliction from friends. "Sweet friend," he said, "if I have a thought of sorrow it is for you, and if I have grief, it is that you should live a life of constant labour. It may not always be so."

He speedily departed, but a painful thought dwelt on Anne's mind, that some affliction was preying on the mind of St. John. Meanwhile Mary Faithful grew more and more feeble, and she approached the last steps which descend to the valley of the shadow of death. At last her gentle spirit winged its flight to the "hands that fashioned it."

The day of the funeral was delayed in order that St. John might attend as mourner; but day after day passed away, and no St. John appeared. "Surely some accident has befallen him," said Ferdinand Faithful.

"But where shall we seek him," said Anne Faithful, "for when he last left us there was a gloom upon his countenance."

"If indeed he be in affliction, we should offer him sympathy," replied Ferdinand, "and I will do my best to find him."

(To be continued.)

Spirit of Discovery.

POISONS OF THE ANCIENTS.

At the conversazione at the College of Physicians, on Monday, May 27, Sir Henry Hallford read a curious paper, in which he investigated the causes of the death of certain celebrated characters of antiquity, with especial reference to the knowledge of poisons possessed by the ancients. Sylla, he observed, died, in consequence of the rupture of an internal abscess, through an excess of rage; which, according to Valerius Maximus, produced a violent vomiting of blood, and death. Crassus, the eminent lawyer and friend of Cicero, died of pleurisy; and Sir Henry remarked that the course of treatment for this disorder, prescribed by Celsus, and in use at the time—namely bleeding, cupping, and blistering, was so similar to that pursued at the present day, that nothing was probably left undone that could have saved his valuable life. Pomponius Atticus, whom Cicero loved as a brother, and who was on friendly terms with all parties in the disturbed times in which he lived, was said to have died of a fistula in the loins; it was probably, Sir Henry thinks, a dysentery ending, as that disorder commonly does, in an affection of the lower bowels. He had recourse to starvation, a very common expedient amongst the Romans, and died in ten days, aged 77. The latter end of Socrates was brought about by the common mode of despatching persons capitally convicted at Athens, namely, by a narcotic poison; but neither Xenophon nor Plutarch tells us the species of poison. The poisons of this class known to the ancients were aconite, white poppy, hyoscyamus, and hemlock. The black poppy might be the Theban drug. The hyoscyamus was used at Constantinople, and was very likely the nepenthe spoken of by Homer. But most probably the poison administered to Socrates was the same as that given to other condemned criminals—namely, *konion, cicuta*, hemlock. Juvenal attributes his death to hemlock—

— "Dulcique senex vicinus Hymetto,

"Qui partem acceptas sava inter vincla cicuta."

Whatever may have been the species of poison, it was one of weak and slow operation, for the executioner told Socrates that if he entered into earnest dispute it would prevent its effect; and it was sometimes necessary to repeat the dose three or four times. Its operation was gradually to produce insensibility, coldness of the extremities, and death. What was that poison by which Hannibal destroyed

himself? It was improbable that we should ever know. Modern chemistry had discovered a variety of subtle poisons that might be introduced into a ring, and, under certain circumstances, destroy life. One drop of Prussic acid might produce paralysis, and, if taken into the stomach, would instantly arrest the current of life. But it was not likely that the Carthagenians were acquainted with Prussic acid; Lybia most probably produced poisons sufficiently subtle and destructive to accomplish the fatal purpose of Hannibal. As to the report of its being bullock's blood, that, Sir Henry observed, must be a fable, as well as in the case of the death of Themistocles, for it is well ascertained that the blood of that animal was not poison. An accomplished nobleman had told him (Sir H. Halford) that he had been present at a bull-fight in Spain, when, after the metador had killed the bull, a person ran up, caught the animal's blood in a goblet, and drank it off, as a popular remedy for a consumption. With respect to the poison with which Nero destroyed Britannicus, comparing the account given by Tacitus with the effects of laurel-water, Sir Henry was disposed to think that this was the identical drug. It appeared that the Emperor applied to Locusta, a female poisoner, to procure some vegetable poison that would kill speedily. She produced one which destroyed a goat in five hours. Nero, however, required a poison which would kill instantly, and she procured such an ingredient. At the banquet Britannicus called for water, which the *pregustator* tasted; it was not sufficiently cool; part was then poured off, and the fatal liquid added; the young man drank, was seized with an epileptic fit, and expired. The case, Sir Henry remarked, was analogous in the effects with that of Sir Theodosius Boughton, who was poisoned by Donallan with laurel-water, and fell down in an epilepsy. In the case of Britannicus, Nero told the company that the young man was liable to such fits; and in the other case, Donallan said that Sir Theodosius had been subject to fits from his infancy. Tacitus mentions a blackness which came over the body of Britannicus; and Sir Henry stated that he was present when the corpse of Sir Theodosius Boughton was disinterred, and its colour resembled that of a pickled walnut. If we could suppose that the Romans were acquainted with the deleterious property of laurel-water, and with the process of distillation, there could be no difficulty in concluding that Britannicus was poisoned with laurel-water. It was true the species of *laurus* which yielded the deleterious liquid did not grow in Italy; but it was a native of Colchis, from whence it might have been brought. The *laurus nobilis* (daphne) grew about Rome, and was used in producing the inspirations of the prophetic priestesses. As to

the knowledge possessed by the Romans of the art of distillation, they had not indeed a still and refrigeratory like the moderns; but they received the vapour from the boiling herbs in a handful of sponge, which, though a rude, was not an inefficient substitute. Alexander the Great had been said to have been poisoned; but this was inconsistent with the very detailed account of his illness given by Arrian. The report was that the poison was sent by Antiphon, and was of such a peculiar nature that no silver or metallic substance would contain it, and it was conveyed in the hoof of a mule. But the article was really onyx, as Horace—

“Nardi parvus onyx.”

Now, the word *onyx*, in Greek, signified not only a stone, but *unguis*, a hoof or nail; and the second sense had been evidently given instead of that of a precious stone. This double meaning of the term *onyx* explained the account of poison being retained by persons in their *nails*. Alexander really died of a remittent fever caught at Babylon. As to the cause of it, Arrian expressly states that the King was temperate and forbearing in the pleasures of the table; and when we consider the laborious occupations of Alexander, amidst frost and snow, and especially the marsh miasmata of the Babylonian lakes, Sir Henry thought there was no difficulty in conceiving that this was too much even for his frame of adamant. The diary of Arrian, containing the details of Alexander's illness and death, vindicated his memory from the imputation of his having brought on his fate by intemperance. Sir Henry Halford closed his learned and interesting paper by a brief encomium upon the character of Alexander, in the course of which he remarked that the efficiency of the British army in India, which kept millions of natives in subjection, was maintained by the same measures which Alexander devised and executed.—*Times*.

Anecdote Gallery.

NEW WALPOLIANA.

[These pleasantries are from Horace Walpole's *Sketches of the Court of England*, the publication of which the accomplished writer, by his will, prohibited, until twenty years after his death. The Earl of Waldegrave, who inherits Strawberry Hill, together with all its literary treasures, confided this work to the editorial care of his relation, Lord Dover, who has prepared the same for publication, with many valuable illustrative notes.]

Clumps in ornamental landscape:—Sticking a dozen trees here and there, till a lawn looks like the ten of spades. Clumps have their beauty; but in a great extent of coun-

try, how trifling to scatter arbours, where you should spread forests!

Sir John Germain was so ignorant, that he is said to have left a legacy to Sir Matthew Decker, as the author of St. Matthew's Gospel.

Old Marlborough is dying—but who can tell! last year she had lain a great while ill, without speaking; her physicians said, "She must be blistered, or she will die." She called out, "I won't be blistered, and I won't die."

In this age we have some who pretend to impartiality; you will scarce guess how Lord Brook shows his: he gives one vote on one side, one on the other, and the third time does not vote at all, and so on, regularly. * *

Lady Sundon is dead, and Lady M— disappointed: she, who is full as politic as my Lord Hervey, had made herself an absolute servant to Lady Sundon, but I don't hear that she has left her even her old clothes. Lord Sundon is in great grief: I am surprised, for she has had fits of madness ever since her ambition met such a check by the death of the queen. She had great power with her, though the queen pretended to despise her; but had unluckily told her, or fallen into her power, by some secret. I was saying to Lady Pomfret, "To be sure she is dead—very rich!" she replied, with some warmth, "She never took money." When I came home, I mentioned this to Sir R. "No," said he, "but she took jewels; Lord Pomfret's place of master of the horse to the queen was bought of her for a pair of diamond ear-rings, of fourteen hundred pounds value." One day that she wore them at a visit at old Marlbro's, as soon as she was gone, the duchess said to Lady Mary Wortley, "How can that woman have the impudence to go about in that bribe?" "Madam," said Lady Mary, "how would you have people know where wine is to be sold, unless there is a sign hung out?" Sir R. told me, that in the enthusiasm of her vanity, Lady Sundon had proposed to him to unite with her, and govern the kingdom together: he bowed, begged her patronage, but said he thought nobody fit to govern the kingdom but the king and queen. * * *

Churchill (General C—, a natural son of the Marlborough family) asked Pultney the other day, "Well, Mr. Pultney, will you break me too?" "No, Charles," replied he, "you break fast enough of yourself!" Don't you think it hurt him more than the other breaking would? * * *

You will laugh at a comical thing that happened the other day to Lord Lincoln. He sent the Duke of Richmond word that he would dine with him in the country; and if he would give him leave, would bring Lord Bury with him. It happens that Lord Bury is nothing less than the Duke of Richmond's nephew. The duke, very properly, sent him word back, that Lord Bury might bring him, if he pleased. I have been plagued all this

morning with that oaf of unlicked antiquity, Prideaux, and his great boy. He talked through all Italy, and every thing in all Italy. Upon mentioning Stosch, I asked if he had seen his collection. He replied, very few of his things, for he did not like his company; that he never heard so much *heathenish talk* in his days. I inquired what it was, and found that Stosch had one day said before him, *that the soul was only a little glue*. I laughed so much, that he walked off; I suppose thinking that I believed so too.

Of a Mr. Naylor:—When his father married his second wife, Naylor said, "Father, they say you are to be married to-day, are you?" "Well," replied the Bishop, "and what is that to you?" "Nay, nothing; only if you had told me, I would have powdered my hair."

George II.—At last the mighty monarch does not go to Flanders, after making the greatest preparations that ever were made but by Harry the Eighth, and the authors of the grand Cyrus and the illustrious Bassa: you may judge by the quantity of napkins, which were to the amount of nine hundred dozen—indeed, I don't recollect that ancient heroes were ever so provident of necessaries, or thought how they were to wash their hands and face after a victory. Six hundred horses, under the care of the Duke of Richmond, were even shipped; and the clothes and furniture of his court magnificent enough for a bull-fight at the conquest of Grenada. Felton Hervey's war horse, besides having richer caparisons than any of the expedition, had a gold net to keep off the flies—in winter!

I remember a tutor at Cambridge, who had been examining some lads in Latin; but in a little while excused himself, and said he must speak English, for his mouth was very sore.

After going out of the Commons and fighting a duel with Mr. Chetwynd, whom he wounded,—“My uncle (says Walpole) returned to the house, and was so little moved as to speak immediately upon the *cambric bill*,” which made Swinny say, “That it was a sign he was not ruffled.”

Dettingen.—The maiden heroes of the guards are in great wrath with General Ilton, who kept them out of harm's way. They call him the confectioner, because he says he preserved them.

Sir Charles Wager always said, “that if a sea-fight lasted three days, he was sure the English suffered the most for the two first, for no other nation would stand beating for two days together.”

[A worthy lord mayor furnishes some droll stories, *ex. gr.* :]

Yesterday we had another hearing of the petition of the merchants, when Sir Robert Godschall shone brighter than even his usual: there was a copy of a letter produced, the

original being lost; he asked whether the copy had been taken before the original was lost, or after!

This gold-chain came into parliament, cried up for his parts, but proves so dull, one would think he chewed opium. Earle says, "I have heard an oyster speak as well twenty times."

Hearing of a gentleman who had had the small-pox twice, and died of it, he asked, if he died the first time or the second?

Portry.

WOMAN, THE ANGEL OF LIFE.

A Poem, by Robert Montgomery.

[The following are a few of the gems of this impassioned and highly-wrought Poem, which, in graceful imagery and well-turned sentiment, equals any of the author's previous productions:—]

GODLIKE is the creature man!
The past is glittering where he ran
Triumphantly his onward track;
With prints of glory!—trace them back;
Behold him stamp o'er land and sea
The might of immortality!
To him whom waves nor winds restrain,
The elements resign their reign;
While cowering Earth and Ocean meet,
To lay their sceptres at his feet,
Whose hand the rock or mountain fells,
Or strews the globe with miracles
Of form and motion—wondrous things,
That mimic God's imaginings!—
And in his mind there is a sense
That gasps to reach omnipotence;
Who, half almighty, would be more
Than life can feel, or thought explore!

Yet, not because with bolder light
The traits of manhood court the sight,
And Action, with incessant claim,
Can summon forth each high-born aim,
The softer tints of woman's soul
Pervade the world with less control.
The thunder is the king of sound,
But ever may the breeze abound,
And quiver on melodious wing,
Where beauty walks, or health can spring:
The forest wears inspiring gloom,
But yet we seek the flowerets' bloom;
Old Ocean hath terrific grace
Imprinted on his hoary face,
But, oh! how dear some tranquil dream,
That haunts the bank of village stream!—
And thus, methinks, doth woman's heart
A gentler, not less glorious part
In Life's dim tragedy fulfil,—
The feebler, but the perfect still:
And as in Nature charms there be,
Which all enjoy, though none can see,
The light and love of female power
Have graced how many a graceless hour,
And round the spirit twined a zone
Too delicate for eyes to own!
Let Valour, Strength, and Wisdom claim
Their summit on the throne of fame;
Yet meekened heart and mind subdued
Become the charm of womanhood;
And thoughts that might creation yield,
By man's dominion taught to yield,
Lie mute and dead in lonely rest,
And leave the soul but half express'd!
For man, not nature, is the power
That darkens from its natal hour
The mind which decks the softer race,
And dooms them to a second place.

BEAUTY.

And when disease's poison'd breath
Hath tainted life with hues of death;
When time has dimm'd that starry gaze
Whose magic thrilled our younger days,—
There is a love whose light remains
To warm the heart when passion wanes:
For beauty born within the mind
Admits no mean decay;
The earth may shrink, the sun grow blind,
Ere that dissolve away!

CREATION OF WOMAN.

More lovely than a vision brought
From out the fairy realms of thought;
Serene and silent, with a grace
Divinely breath'd o'er form and face,
In full array of love and light,
That dazzled his adoring sight,
By soul and sense to be revered—
The Angel of the world appear'd!
Then, what a starry welcome rang!
Each Orb an hymenal sang,
While shapes unutterably bright
From heaven gazed down with new delight,
When first the ground a woman trod,
Just moulded by the hand of God!—
Around her breast, in wreathy play,
Her locks like braided sunbeams lay;
And limbs unweild a radiance cast
Of purity, as on the past's
Amid the bloom and balm of flowers,
That clustered round elysian bowers;
The bird and breeze together blent
Their notes of mildest languishment;
The sun grew brighter as he shed
His glory round her living head,—
As if no orb of space were free
From one fine spell of sympathy,
When woman rose upon the scene,
Creation's fair and faultless queen!

DOMESTIC PEACE.

Vain would truth reflect in song
What nameless fascinations throng
Around that quiet hearth alone,
Where tenderness hath rear'd its throne.—
Oh! there are feelings, rich but faint,
The hues of language cannot paint;
And pleasures, delicately deep,
Which, like the palaces of sleep,
Melt into dimness, when the Light
Would look upon their fairy sight;
And there are chords of happiness
Whose spirit-tones our fancy bless,
And make the music of our joy
Complete without one harsh alloy,—
Yet, vain would words one note reveal
Of melody which mind can feel!—
But who hath left some calm domain
Where home was charm'd by woman's reign,
And trifles, through some magic, wore
An air they never breathed before,—
And enter'd where a proud abode
To ruder man its splendour owed,
Nor felt the contrast sternly cold,
Like winter o'er his spirit roll'd?
Yet there may garden, grove, and bower,
Attend on each retiring hour;
There Painting with impassion'd glow
The poetry of colours show;
While volumes rank'd in rich array
The heroes of the mind display:—
Yet, like a face, when death has chill'd
The light that once each feature fill'd,
Contrasted with its living power
Beheld in some excited hour,—
Are homes where single man is seen,
With those where woman's spell hath been.

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